

CONCERNING THE DISTINGUISHED
CAREER OF DAVID J. MCCARTHY

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 7, 1997

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to sing well deserved praises for David J. McCarthy, Jr., who is retiring from the Georgetown University Law Center as professor and former dean after 37 years. Every Member of this body knows well that Georgetown is among the Nation's top law schools. Not every Member knows how the law school got that way. Great law schools do not just happen. They are made, not born.

One of those who made it happen was Dave McCarthy. Dave was dean at a critical moment for the Law Center in this century from 1975 to 1983. During Dave's tenure, the law Center firmly established itself as the first-rate institution it has been known to be ever since.

After his service as dean, Dave McCarthy remained at the Law Center as Carmack Waterhouse Professor of State and Local Government. Dave was a graduate of the Law Center he later was to lead and, as a student, was managing editor of the Georgetown Law Journal. In addition to his law degree, Dave earned an L.L.M. and was awarded an honorary doctorate by Georgetown. His career has been enriched by abundant other activities as well, including service as Chair of the American Association of Law Schools Accreditation Committee, on the Citizens Choice National Commission on the IRS, and the Individual Taxpayer, and on the Executive Committee of the D.C. Pretrial Services Agency.

David McCarthy's service to Georgetown University, to the profession, and to this community has been exemplary. I know that the House of Representatives would want to join me in saluting David J. McCarthy.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE
VENIPUNCTURE FAIRNESS ACT

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 7, 1997

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill titled the Medicare Venipuncture Fairness Act of 1997, to reinstate payment under Medicare for home health services consisting of venipuncture based solely on blood monitoring, and to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to study the appropriate use of venipuncture under the Medicare Program. This essential Medicare home health benefit was denied in the recently passed Balanced Budget Act, and will affect literally thousands of vulnerable Medicare beneficiaries.

Over the past 3 weeks, I have received more than 234 letters from concerned Medicare patients, or their family members and caregivers in my District expressing their grave concern over the devastating impact this provision will have on seriously ill and disabled seniors.

As I introduce this legislation today, I am pleased to be joined in sponsoring the bill by

my friends and distinguished colleagues, Representatives POSHARD, MOLLOHAN, CLAYTON, KILPATRICK, MCINTYRE, FROST, COSTELLO, CLEMENT, BAESLER, ADERHOLT, BOUCHER, and CRAMER.

Of the 38 million Medicare recipients in the United States, we know that approximately 4 million receive some type of home health benefit—this is the only number HCFA has available. Speaking of HCFA—the Health Care Financing Administration, it is useful and telling to note that while the agency claims the venipuncture prohibition was put into law to fight fraud and abuse in the Medicare home health benefit, there are no studies or reports that exist, either from HCFA, the HHS Inspector General or the General Accounting Office [GAO], linking blood monitoring in home care to fraud, waste, or abuse. Removing blood monitoring as a qualifying service for the Medicare home health benefit was a vast overreaction—indeed it was a solution in search of a problem in my view.

Mr. Speaker, if we start down that slippery slope of denying or withdrawing services because some unscrupulous provider decides to defraud or abuse the system, we will have to terminate nearly every federally supported benefit program that exists today.

Another important point to remember is that the need for blood monitoring does not automatically result in eligibility for home health care. An individual must meet all of the very detailed and specific eligibility requirements for home health care and services must be prescribed by a physician. Currently, nearly 1 million home health beneficiaries need blood monitoring.

In rural communities where nearly 38 percent of residents are unserved by public transportation, Medicare beneficiaries who need blood monitoring will face special problems. In these areas, travel by the elderly, sick or disabled seniors is nearly impossible. Ambulance services would cost as much as \$250 a trip—much, much more costly than paying for blood monitoring at home. Moreover, if these beneficiaries cannot get proper blood monitoring services, they will end up in institutions like hospitals or nursing homes at a much higher cost to Medicare.

One of the senior citizens from my congressional district who wrote to me says that he suffers from Black Lung disease, is confined to a wheelchair on 24-hour oxygen, and suffers from heart problems for which he takes medication plus blood thinners. How vulnerable can you get? How can this man or his caregiver get to a doctor's office or a laboratory for timely and medically necessary blood monitoring?

My colleagues, it is one thing to penalize unscrupulous providers by cutting off reimbursement under Medicare, but to penalize the sick, disabled elderly who have not committed fraud or abused the system is quite another. The 234 Medicare beneficiaries in my district who have contacted me concerning this loss in their benefit, are confused and afraid—confused because they've done nothing wrong, afraid because they can't get to an outside facility, physician, or laboratory to get blood samples taken. They do not know what will happen to them, the stability of their health, or their peace of mind. They believe their ability to remain in their own homes, as opposed to a hospital or nursing home, hangs in the balance.

In the name of fairness, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Medicare Venipuncture Fairness Act so that we can rectify this injustice to Medicare beneficiaries. The legislation not only repeals the provision in the BBA that denies home health services based solely on blood monitoring, but mandates a study to look at past abuses in the benefit and to recommend standards for the appropriate use of venipuncture services.

Time is of the essence. I call upon my colleagues to join with me quickly so that we can defeat this proposal before it becomes effective on February 5, 1998, leaving thousands of needy Americans without a vital health care benefit.

If you wish to cosponsor, please call me or Mrs. Kyle on my staff at X53452.

COMMENDATION OF BUTLER HIGH
SCHOOL GOLDEN TORNADO
MARCHING BAND

HON. PHIL ENGLISH

OF PENNSYLVANIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 7, 1997

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on Thanksgiving this year, the New York's Macy's parade will step off, headed by a band from Pennsylvania's 21st District.

The Butler High School Golden Tornado Marching Band is the proud representative of the Butler Area School District, and the community of Butler. The community, located 40 miles north of Pittsburgh, supports the band with over \$84,000 in new uniforms, 10 buses, 2 equipment trucks, and a van to transport the band to its performances.

The band, led by Mr. Vincent James Sanzotti, has four directors, a dance team adviser, and a twirler adviser. They provide not only the technical skills, but that important, intangible ingredient of leadership and inspiration that are so necessary to success.

Mr. Sanzotti and his colleagues are privileged to work with the youth of Butler. This year the band has 367 young men and women in its ranks. Day in, day out, these kids practice, and practice hard. That determined work has paid off with a long, winning tradition. The Golden Tornado has won a slew of first place awards in competitions and parades over the years. It has even been featured in four different Pittsburgh Steelers performances.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the Butler Golden Tornado Marching Band, and the fact that they will be leading the Macy's parade. Our televisions often carry stories of youths in trouble. On Thanksgiving Day our television sets will show 367 Butler teenagers who are making music, not trouble.

IN HONOR OF DESPINA MARANGOS

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 7, 1997

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Despina Marangos, one of my constituents who represents the hard-working spirit of a first generation American, on her 80th birthday.